

Material and Finish Guide

The materials and finishes this workshop states it works in, and what each one does to a sculpture outdoors and indoors.

Workshop	Shenzhen Maoping Sculpture Art Co., Ltd.
Address	No. 22 Jinxiu East Road, Kengzi, Pingshan District, Shenzhen, China
Email	info@maoping.art
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Materials	304 and 316 stainless steel, corten steel, brass and bronze, fiberglass
Finishes	Mirror polishing, brushed finishing, painting and spray process, gold
Sphere sizes	Stated from 25 mm to 10 m diameter, and almost any size to specification
Ordering	Orders taken according to a photograph or a drawing from the customer
Production time	Stated as 35 to 45 days depending on the piece
Packing and delivery	Wooden case, Factory Direct and Door to Door Delivery
Quality	The company states it runs its own professional QC team

Material	Normally chosen for	What to watch
304 stainless steel	General outdoor and indoor sculpture. The default body in this range.	Less resistant than 316 where salt air or road salt is present.
316 stainless steel	Coastal sites, pool surrounds and anywhere chlorides are in play.	Costs more; specify it where the exposure justifies it.
Corten steel	Work that is meant to weather to a deep brown and stay that way.	Run off can stain paving during the first weathering period.
Brass and bronze	Interior and figurative work with a warm metal tone.	Heavier than a stainless shell of the same size; check the fixing.
Fiberglass	Large light indoor forms and colour work at lower cost.	Cannot be polished to a mirror; better suited indoors.

Finishes

Mirror polishing

Throws the surroundings back at the viewer. The strongest effect and the least forgiving of a poor weld or a flat spot.

Brushed finishing

Calms the reflection and hides handling marks. Often the right answer for an interior with a lot of light fittings.

Painting and spray process

Removes reflection in favour of colour. Used where the scheme wants the piece to read as a shape, not a mirror.

Gold and coloured coatings

Applied over the polished shell, so the polish underneath still has to be sound.

How the workshop controls it

Scheme Design

The form is worked out against the site: the environment sets the content, the proportion and the colour before any steel is cut. This is where a reference photograph becomes a buildable object.

Scale Model

Complex or large pieces are modelled small first, then scaled up. Large work also needs its internal support designed at this point, against the load, the dimensions and the shape it has to hold.

Mould

The model is turned into a hard mould, normally plaster, which is what the steel is formed over.

Forging and Forming

The plate is forged to the mould to build the complete shell. The piece is then ground repeatedly and the surface is treated.

Surface Finish

Stainless steel is silver white and glossy in itself, and is left mirror or brushed, or sprayed to whatever colour the scheme calls for.

Installation

Final assembly is generally welded rather than bolted, which is more solid, and the skeleton of the piece carries it once it is standing.